

Message Text

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USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER IMMEDIATE

USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT IMMEDIATE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L NICOSIA 2723

USCINCEUR FOR POLAD

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CY, PINT

SUBJ: RESULTS OF GREEK CYPRIOT ELECTIONS

REF: NICOSIA 2672(DTG 060828Z SEP 76)

1. SUMMARY. PRO-MAKARIOS "POPULAR FRONT" MADE CLEAN SWEEP OF HOUSE ELECTIONS. UNUSUALLY LARGE VOTER TURNOUT DEMONSTRATES ARCHBISHOP'S ENDURING POPULARITY AND ABILITY TO MANIPULATE GREEK CYPRIOT POLITICS. CLERIDES' RESOUNDING DEFEAT APPEARS TO REMOVE HIM FROM CENTRAL POLITICAL ROLE FOR TIME BEING. RESULTS
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ALSO MEAN THAT PROSPECTS FOR SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN

CYPRUS' TWO COMMUNITIES ARE REDUCED. ONLY PROBLEM FOR ARCHBISHOP IS THAT A FAIRLY SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION OF THE ELECTORATE (27 PERCENT) HAVE SHOWN THEIR OPPOSITION TO HIM AND WILL BE UNREPRESENTED IN THE HOUSE. END SUMMARY

2. WITH RESULTS NOW ALL IN AND NO APPARENT CHALLENGES OR RECOUNTS IN THE OFFING, IT APPEARS CLEAR THAT "POPULAR FRONT" OF COMMUNIST AKEL, PSEUDO-SOCIALIST EDEK, AND KYPRIANOU'S CENTER-RIGHTIST DEMOCRATIC FRONT HAS WON A SWEEPING VICTORY OVER CLERIDES' DEMOCRATIC RALLY. SEATS IN 35-MEMBER HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES WILL BE DISTRIBUTED AS FOLLOWS: DEMOCRATIC FRONT 21, AKEL 9, EDEK 4, AND ONE INDEPENDENT. TASSOS PAPADOPOULOS WHO RAN ASSOCIATED WITH "POPULAR FRONT." GIVEN CYPRUS' COMPLICATED VOTING SYSTEM WITH CONSIDERABLE CROSS PARTY VOTING IN DISTRICTS WHICH VARY GREATLY IN SIZE, IT IS DIFFICULT TO CONVERT RESULTS INTO MEANINGFUL STATISTICAL ANALYSIS. WE ESTIMATE HOWEVER, THAT ABOUT 27 PERCENT OF THOSE VOTING SUPPORTED CLERIDES AND 71 PERCENT THE PRO-MAKARIOS "POPULAR FRONT."

3. THE LARGE VOTER TURNOUT BELIES EARLIER INDICATIONS THAT THIS ELECTION WOULD BE CHARACTERIZED BY VOTER APATHY. WHEREAS IN 1970 LEGISLATIVE ELECTION, 76 PERCENT OF THE REGISTERED VOTERS CAST BALLOTS, IN SUNDAY'S ELECTION 85 PERCENT OF THE 274,085 REGISTERED VOTERS TURNED OUT. VOTERS ALSO UTILIZED MORE OF THE VOTES AVAILABLE TO THEM. IN 1970 THE GREEK CYPRIOT VOTER EXERCISED APPROXIMATELY 70 PERCENT OF THE OPTIONS ON HIS BALLOT; IN 1976 HE EXERCISED 94 PERCENT.

4. COMMENT: WE SEE SWEEPING VICTORY OF "POPULAR FRONT" AS A RALLYING TO MAKARIOS AS THE GREEK CYPRIOT LEADER RATHER THAN VOTER SUPPORT OF ANY PARTICULAR ISSUE. VICTORY OF PRO-MAKARIOS FORCES ALSO ATTESTS TO ARCHBISHOP'S CONTINUING ABILITY TO CONTROL GREEK CYPRIOT POLITICAL SCENE. CAREFULLY AVOIDING ANY OSTENSIBLE APPEARANCE OF TAKING SIDES, HE NEVERTHELESS SUCCESSFULLY CONVEYED TO THE FAITHFUL THE FACT THAT THE ELECTION WAS BASICALLY A CONTEST BETWEEN HIMSELF AND CLERIDES. IN CREATING THIS IMPRESSION ARCHBISHOP WAS AIDED BY CLERIDES HIMSELF WHOSE SPEECHES AND CONSPICUOUS ABSENCE FROM AIRPORT CEREMONIES FOR MAKARIOS POINTED UP THE SPLIT.
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5. RESULTS OF ELECTION DO NOT REFLECT TOTAL ACHIEVEMENT OF MAKARIOS' APPARENT GOALS. WE UNDERSTAND HE WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO HAVE HAD ALL POLITICAL PARTIES REPRESENTED IN THE HOUSE. HE IS REPORTED TO HAVE OFFERED CLERIDES A NUMBER OF SEATS IN THE HOUSE IN EXCHANGE FOR THE LATTER'S PARTICIPATION IN A NATIONAL COALITION. CLERIDES REFUSED AND RESULT WAS UNPRECEDENTED OPPOSITION TO THE ARCHBISHOP'S NORMAL PRACTICE OF

ORCHESTRATING ELECTIONS. THUS, THE PRESIDENT'S IMAGE AS THE UNCHALLENGED LEADER OF GREEK CYPRUS HAS BEEN SLIGHTLY TARNISHED BY THE FACT THAT APPROXIMATELY 27 PERCENT OF THE VOTING PUBLIC HAVE SHOWN THEIR OPPOSITION TO HIM. THIS WILL BE A CONTINUING POLITICAL ISSUE AS HIS OPPONENTS, BOTH DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN, CAN POINT OUT THAT MORE THAN ONE QUARTER OF THE PEOPLE OF GREEK CYPRUS ARE WITHOUT POLITICAL REPRESENTATION.

6. DOUBTLESS RESULTS ARE HEAVY BLOW TO CLERIDES' POLITICAL FORTUNES IN CYPRUS' STRONG-EXECUTIVE SYSTEM, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IS NOT BODY WITH FAR-REACHING POWERS, BUT BY FAILING TO GAIN ANY SEATS AT ALL, CLERIDES HAS BEEN DEPRIVED OF WHAT HAS BEEN IN PAST HIS MAJOR POLITICAL PLATFORM. IN ADDITION, CLERIDES' PERSONAL PRESTIGE HAS SUFFERED FROM THIS DEFEAT AND HIS FUTURE PROSPECTS ARE AT MOMENT CLOUDY. IN POST-ELECTION STATEMENT HE INDICATED THAT DEMOCRATIC RALLY WILL CONTINUE "ON POLITICAL SCENE AND OUR CONTRIBUTION TO PUBLIC LIFE WILL BE CONTINUOUS AND VIGOROUS." THUS CLERIDES' POLITICAL ROLE NOW APPEARS TO BE LIMITED TO LEADING AND GIVING VOICE TO EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITION. IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT NEW FACTORS COULD EMERGE TO RETURN HIM TO THE CENTER OF CYPRIOT POLITICAL LIFE, POSSIBILITIES COULD INCLUDE DRAMATIC CHANGE IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH TURKISH CYPRIOTS OR DEPARTURE OF MAKARIOS FROM GREEK CYPRIOT SCENE.

7. IMPACT OF THESE ELECTIONS ON INTERCOMMUNAL NEGOTIATIONS AT PRESENT APPEARS NEGATIVE. MAKARIOS WILL PROBABLY FEEL STRENGTHENED IN HIS POSITION BY WHAT IS SEEN HERE AS RESOUNDING VOTE OF CONFIDENCE IN HIS LEADERSHIP. TURK CYPRIOTS, FOR THEIR PART, WILL SEE RESULTS AS CONFIRMING IN POWER THOSE SUPPORTING "LONG STRUGGLE", CLOSING THE DOORS TO NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT, AND DEMONSTRATING THAT NO REASONABLE ALTERNATIVE TO UDI EXISTS. END COMMENT.

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